REVIEW ARTICLE

Impact of Information and Communications Technology on Public Library System

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ABSTRACT

This paper discusses the effectiveness of public libraries in the Information and Communications Technology (ICT) environment and to what extend that the public library users have benefited from such environment. Public libraries provide ICT applications with efficient and effective government services. This article highlights the definition, nature, goals and kinds of the public libraries apart from discussing their current situation in the ICT sector. The paper also elaborates access to information and academic resources, promotion of traditional and social activities, unauthorized self-education, advanced services, etc. that are enabled by such libraries in the current scenario.

Keywords: Public library academic resources ICT

1. INTRODUCTION

Public libraries aim to service people to meet their required information [1]. These are the sources of knowledge and facts that allow the persons to enhance their skills, decision-making and research abilities and to promote the society. Many individuals in India who live in remote regions are less aware of novel progressing technologies and thus there forms a gap between rural and urban communities.

Network advanced technologies enable interaction between public libraries and their users. Thereby even the users at remote places can be linked to one another at reasonable cost. Due to ICT services, the number of collections and services of public libraries get affected. These libraries offer instructive data of all sectors including society, culture, government, politics, agriculture and economy and so they are known to be social in institutes, which are also noteworthy for numerous services for the growth of the community. As their goal relates to social mission, these libraries work for society growth alone. They also offer teaching and learning programs, research and development

and public entertainment. According to Hendrix, public libraries are safe to watch or browse by book queues.

Implementation and use of ICT is possible in exchange for information, ensuring user skills and staff efficacy. Besides network and web services, RFID, barcode etc. also benefit the users. Open source software like KOHA provides free automation as well as free digitization of public library resources and these facilities are really a boon to the readers. Free and open source programs like such as Dspace, Greenstone, ePrints are beneficial for free digitization as well as professional interaction among the library users. Open source software preserve collections using organized repositories, which come under public library system. National knowledge Commission recommends public libraries and the organized repositories as the vital factors to knowledge management.

Public libraries that are maintained via ICT are funded from public financial resources to collect library books, magazines, audio books, e-books,

CDs, DVDs, video tapes, cassettes, and other materials. These libraries also deliver facilities like Internet, readers advisory service, society assemblies, adult education programs, career counseling, cultural programs, discussion groups and mobile library services [3].

2. DEFINITIONS OF PUBLIC LIBRARY

Some fundamental definitions of the public library are as follows: It includes understanding the meaning of money, the objectives and effectiveness of the public library and the role of the society's development.

The American Library Association (ALA) defines public libraries as:

"No one should be denied information because he or she cannot afford the cost of a book or periodical, have access to the internet or information in any of its various formats."

The definitions of public libraries vary with respect to different experts; however UNESCO defines as per follows:

1. Public Library is financed for the most part out of public funds.
2. It charges no fees from users and yet is open for full use by the public.
3. It is intended as an auxiliary educational institution providing a means of self education which is endless.
4. It houses educative and informative materials giving reliable information freely and without partiality.

3. NATURE AND TYPES OF PUBIC LIBRARIES:

Public libraries differ from academic libraries and are managed by the government. The use of technology in this library has influenced people's information as a universal information. Popular and historical tools are easily accessible in public libraries. They are managed by five laws of library science as directed by S. R. Ranganathan, the father of Library Science.

The types of Public Library are as below

1. National Library
2. State Central Library
3. District Central Library
4. Village Library
5. Mobile Library.

4. AIMS OF PUBLIC LIBRARY

The following are the aims of Public Library
1. To improve the standard of education.
2. To be accessible by all at free of cost.
3. To provide valuable information as a whole to the society.
4. To be based on document librarian-users.
5. To enable information literacy.

5. THE PRESENT SCENARIO

India is one of the largest democratic nations in the world. It has high population rate and stands next to China, which is the first. Population growth impacts literacy and education, in where the public libraries come to role which is defined by UNESCO in its Public Library Manifesto. According to UNESCO, public libraries make way to knowledge and they also provide fundamental services for continuous learning and social growth by supporting both individuals and the communities as a whole. These are considered to be the people oriented institutions that must service a large number of population in the society [2].

At present, lack of human power and funds, and improper infrastructure affect the Indian public libraries. These libraries have lower priorities in the policy library and decision making process. As population growth in India is high, public libraries are expected to offer advanced supports and facilities to the public. As information technology is concerned, India is also leading. In fact, India exports knowledge workforces in this field. Currently in the digital era, public libraries are the main hubs to provide digital information for the welfare of the individuals in the community. In contrast, since India is an under developed nation, the economic states of public libraries are considered to be weaker than developed countries [4]. When compared with the public libraries, the academic and special libraries are leading with respect to the incorporation of automation and networking system at higher standard and thereby this system is lower in case of public libraries. Public libraries function based on funding of federal and state governments, human resources and infrastructure. As a result, these libraries use modern tools and technologies to implement ICT. For effective promotion of information with traditional library service, people's libraries should

provide information services to the community in the current scenario.

Public libraries in urban areas have information and information services. People in rural areas have denied public library services through information technology facilities.

After Independence, the growth of public libraries in India has generally increased. Before independence, literacy, transportation and mass media are some of the challenges, particularly in rural communities. After Independence, the visual public libraries have evolved to some degree, but lack in development and manual lessons of several books.

As per the comparison of Varma and Agarwal, India lags behind and still there is wide gap between developing India and the developed nations. The first census in 1951, shows that there were 950 public libraries throughout, which were operated by local governments. This number has more than 1,500 subscription libraries. There are hundreds of books and reading rooms in these libraries. The Delhi public library founded in 1951, targets to adapt advanced methods with the Indian scenarios and to act as Asia's model public library.

The central government's involvement in public libraries in some states is the main reason for improving public libraries in India after independence [6 and 7].

6. ROLE OF PUBLIC LIBRARIES

Public libraries execute certain tasks for the betterment of the society as given below [8].

- Public libraries access to various sources of knowledge and data which in turn provide information as per requirement. They assist to meet the educational requirements of the local community at where the public library is situated.
- Public libraries assure to function as instrumental agency to provide informal self-education to all the grown-ups by providing essential learning tools to improve their skills based on their interest. The self-education system includes techniques of agrarian processes, bee keeping, poultry etc.
- Public libraries support socio-cultural groups like children and youth forums, students and workers associations, dramatic and film clubs, teachers, lawyers, engineers,

doctors and employer's associations, etc. by conducting educational and social events.

- Public libraries have to preserve local materials by identifying and collecting essential cultural materials such as art/sculpture works, paintings and musical instruments existing in their jurisdiction to connect the individuals with their post-culture.
- They strengthen democratic spirit in terms of developing unity in diversity and supporting democratic life styles. These libraries are regarded as democratic institutions.

The nature of the community should be multilingual and multicultural religion, celebration, celebration of celebration in society, and the people from different cultural groups should be met.

The UNESCO declaration declares that this public library initiative has created a relationship between the past and the future, for the purpose that public library relates to the refreshment of the soul by providing books for spontaneity and happiness' (UNESCO-2004) [9].

General public library society needs to meet individual needs. So, collective information is collected based on small to higher levels of regions (local, region and nation-wise). Public libraries are funded by public funding, providing free and neutral services irrespective of castings and religious affiliations for local communities. Therefore such libraries are said to be democratic institutes that enable facts regarding human development at educational and cultural levels [10 and 11].

If we consider the importance of the universal library of the society, we have to work with the public library community information units and research and recognized education support centers, consortia, union or share catalog services, etc.

Apart from these aforementioned services, the public libraries are also supposed to facilitate the following modern services.

- a) Public library portals.
- b) Internet and network based functions.
- c) Services via digitized collections, E-books, hybrid libraries etc.
- d) Data literacy events.
- e) Commercial and bibliographic online databases.
- f) Children oriented services.
- g) Photo-coping facilities.

h) Online catalogue services and
i) Resource sharing.

The present society exists in an era of information and so it should be information literate, and there should not be any hindrance in accessing their required information. These modern facilities act as an efficient mode for the individuals to make use of available materials for prompt and accurate accessing of the information.

7. CONCLUSION

The current context of public libraries in India is not satisfactory in terms of available sources in these libraries such as resources like human resources, finance and construction, furniture, equipment and other physical resources. Public libraries in rural areas unable to offer modern services due to the absence of above mentioned resources. Even though public libraries play a significant role in social and national economic development, educational and cultural growth, these libraries have to strengthen their internal activities and plans.

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